

Case study: Implementing the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Learnings from Ardoch

Ardoch is a children's education charity focused on improving educational outcomes for children and young people in communities facing disadvantage.

Volunteers are at the heart of Ardoch's work. More than 1,000 people volunteer each year to support the delivery of Ardoch's education programs, in roles ranging from in-school student support, year-long matched Buddies programs, occasional volunteering to support mock interviews, and providing administrative support from the office or remotely at home. Ardoch also has a team of volunteer managers, coordinators, and administrators to support volunteer engagement and ensure that volunteers have the greatest impact through their roles.

As an organisation that is strongly committed to volunteer involvement, Ardoch has a long history of striving for best practice in volunteer engagement. Ardoch has taken advantage of the Volunteering Victoria and Centre for Volunteering (New South Wales) support, including having all staff undertake training on volunteer engagement, multiple employees participating in the Continuing Professional Development program each year, and individual staff members engaging in the mentoring program and/or studying the Cert IV. in Coordination of Volunteer Programs.

"We see the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement as another part of the suite of resources available to us, to help us create a supportive and engaging volunteering experience."

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement have a Gap Assessment Tool that we use to benchmark ourselves with best practice. It was reassuring to see all the areas where our hard work has resulted in meeting the standards, as well as flagging some areas where we still had room to grow.

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The tool has flexibility to be used in a variety of ways depending on your organisation's needs. For some organisations it might be most helpful for outlining baseline standards and highlighting current gaps; for others as a collaborative team activity to realistically evaluate current progress. For some it can be a tool to help advocate internally or externally for increased funding for volunteer coordination, whilst for others an opportunity to lift the voice of volunteers by having them review the organisation's progress.

At Ardoch, as well as using the Gap Assessment Tool, we have embedded the National Standards in our Volunteer Management Policy. Through reviewing our performance against the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, we identified several key areas where we needed to do more. The first of these was increasing volunteer voice and providing pathways for volunteers to take on new responsibilities. This has led to us establishing a Volunteering Steering Committee, adding volunteers to other decision-making bodies, and planning new roles for volunteers throughout the organisation and with greater responsibility, such as mentoring other volunteers.

The second key area we identified was around volunteer support and supervision, which has led to us introducing six-monthly volunteer supervision check-ins, as well as much more support and structure around volunteer induction at our partner schools.

Finally, we identified the need to share more with our volunteers about the impact of their work. We have now implemented a monthly volunteer newsletter, will be creating a volunteer impact report for 2023, and have sought to communicate the program impacts more broadly with our volunteers.

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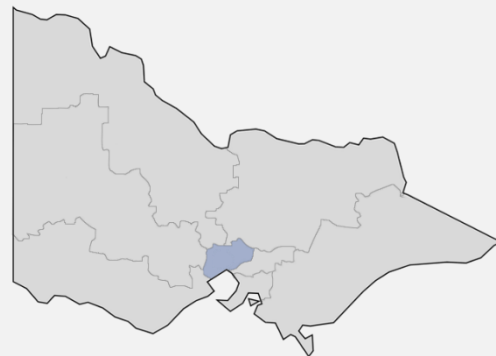
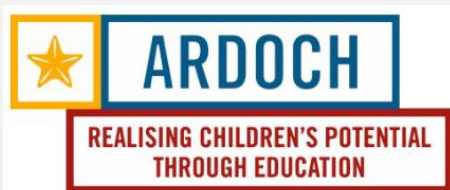
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Overall, by using the National Standards we have improved the experience of people volunteering with Ardoch, which we believe flows into greater impact, and increased likelihood to continue volunteering with Ardoch.

“I would encourage any organisation that involves volunteers to review your performance against the National Standards, so you too can identify ways to improve your volunteer engagement and overall impact.”

Consortium region: North West Metro

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<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/leading-volunteers/vma-2022-2026/>



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Volunteering Victoria acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.